got along splendidly. I was perfectly happy. I wasn't ever going to leave. But everybody thinks Ann Augusta has a claim on me. And here's our adventure gone on the rocks! Look here, Nan—marry me. That will put me out of Ann's thoughts and give me the right to—"

"I yield no rights," she said firmly.

The man stared at her.

"Now, if I were a pirate," he muttered.

"You aren't! You're a bully nice boy and a good pal. But you don't know the first steps in piracy—nor ever will. Lawful gains for you, Tom—and Ann Augusta as a reward."

Their parting was of the briefest; they shook hands, and Nan, relenting at the last, offered him her burning cheek to kiss. He pecked at it, turned away surlily, and leaped into the whale-boat.

As we clambered aboard the schooner, he turned to me with a grimace.

"The only two kisses she ever gave me were in your presence," he mumbled. "Now what do you think of that?"

"I don't think of that," I told him in irritation, "except that you are a pair of fools. What did you think you'd discover on this wild-goose chase?"

"I'll tell you what *I* hoped for," he said bitterly. "I hoped I'd fall in love with the finest girl God ever made. I didn't. Now"—he roared at his crew—"we'll spread some canvas and beat up for the American coast and Ann Augusta!"

An hour later, as the *Lady Lass* rounded the little headland, I picked up the binoculars and gazed back. On the shining beach, right in the midst of the crystal circle made by the glass, I saw Nan Harloe. She was looking at us, quite still, and remote.

FOUR days thereafter Tom Endicott tumbled out of his berth at midnight, took the steps to the deck in two leaps, and I heard the tramp of bare feet, the rising song of the sleepy sailors, and the dull crash of swinging booms. The schooner laid over on the other tack. I drowsily went up to inquire the meaning of this manœuver.

The moon was half way up the sky, slashed with dark ribbons of cloud, and backed by an opaque shadow that merged with the horizon. The *Lady Lass* was nipping into a long, tumbling swell.

"Hurricane," Tom snapped. "Hang it all! We've got to fetch back to Nan's island."

"Four hundred miles sou'west," I reminded him. "Why?"

"That other schooner will get caught in this, and Nan'll be marooned for months, maybe," he told me savagely. "Can't let her stop there alone that long."

"She's safe enough," I insisted. "And we'll run right back into the worst of it."

"If you can stop chattering and keep the wheel for a half hour, I'll be about my reckonings," he said, and was gone.

The schooner behaved beautifully. The wind was blowing unsteadily, but with good strength, and, close-hauled as we were, we made fair weather of it.

"We're in the exact position to make the four hundred miles by keeping dead before the storm as the wind veers. Now for some sailing, old friend!" said Tom.

I remembered that Tom Endicott had been a pretty fair sailor of yachts in the old days, but I trembled when I saw him hoist a big, booming spinaker on the weaving foremast and double the sheets on the big mainsail. The very Kanakas looked askance at him as the little vessel began to surge along with gathering speed, and the swells broke under the forefoot with a roar.

"Not much leeway," he told me in the afternoon, as the two men at the wheel toiled and sweated to keep the *Lady Lass* on her course. "Got to make that island by morning, if we take the sticks out of her. This is only the first wave of the wind. To-morrow you'll see what a tropical hurricane can do."

"Still I don't see your object," I protested. "Miss Harloe is safe—you can't say she would be safer aboard this schooner. And it's a sure thing we can't land and let your vessel go hang."

He paused long enough to stare at the thickening vapor overhead and murmur:

"Poor Nan! To think of her stopping down there for months, maybe, and not knowing whether I was lost or safe."

"You mean to tell me you are taking this risk because you dream a woman who has made it plain she cares nothing for you may worry over your safety?"

"You don't know Nan," he said, drawing me into the shelter of the poop. "She's the kind that worries. When I had the fever down in Guayaquil, I woke up to find her with a broken clinical thermometer in her hand. I spat out the glass and called her Ann Augusta. Bless her heart, she dropped down on her knees beside me and cried. She told me she was glad I would get well and go back to New York. A pal! D'ye think I'm not going back to speak the island and signal her I'm all right?"

"But Ann Augusta?" I cried.

"The butler, the footman, and the maids are looking after her," he said curtly.

ONLY the sharp eyes of the natives found the island in the wild smother the next morning. Tom clung in the fore-rigging and peered long and anxiously ahead. When he came down and rejoined me where I held on by the jerking wheel, he nodded in satisfaction.

"The gale won't be much worse till night," he bawled in my ear. "We can make it!"

"Make what?" I yelled back.

He brushed his bare head with one sinewy hand, and kicked a native from the wheel. The Kanaka glanced at him with an appalled expression. The peak rose ahead of us with prodigious speed, the thundering seas about us began to leap aboard, the long decks filled, the whale-boat went overside in splinters. And Tom held the shrieking vessel to her course into the reeking gulf ahead.

I think we cried out with one voice, the Kanakas and I. For behind us a huge crested comber lifted itself perilously, steaming and boiling, its foaming ridge driving off in long whip-lashes over the doomed schooner. Ahead the vast shadow of the mountain loomed in echoing magnificence, bathed in spume and spray. The *Lady Lass* soared, bows awash, bulwarks crashing, masts whipping, spun onward with a lurch, took a tremendous back-swell to the topmast, shot upward to the send of another surge, leaped clean through the terrific surf, and came down with a roaring, thudding impact on the rocky beach.

An instant later Tom and I were scrambling after the natives out of the shallows to the higher ground. There I faced about and tried to peer into the unspeakable blast of the hurricane. I saw nothing of the schooner—was, in fact, flung backward in the undergrowth of the mountainside by the furious wind.

I got my footing with infinite difficulty, clutching at my bleeding knees and struggling for breath. I was driven on up the slope as if an irresistible power impelled me, and fell at last exhausted in the shelter of an outjutting rock.

The echo of the storm was about me, and poised on the ridge of a crag I saw a tree whipping straight out from its foothold before the blast, like a pennant. It seemed as if I heard its tortured roots yield under the strain, and I watched to see it flick away. It stayed, motionless and taut. I sat up and looked about me.

Above me I saw Nan Harloe coming down the steep ascent, skirts blowing, her arms outstretched to balance her. Tom was waiting, braced against a boulder. They swept into each other's arms, and she lifted her streaming face to his. Their lips met.

AS I watched them fascinatedly, I saw him suddenly hold her out at arm's length, his face contorted with anxiety. She held one hand over her bosom.

"You are hurt!" he cried with profound solicitude.

She nodded, her lips twisted with agony.

"My heart!" she answered.

As a mountainous sea crashed on the shore and drove up almost to my foothold, the Kanakas fled by me in a huddle, silent, terror-stricken. Tom stood with Nan in his embrace, staring into her eyes.

"Nan!" he called.

Slowly she held out her arms again, as if in a single gesture to dismiss pain and welcome happiness. Overhead the world shattered away in unspeakable tumult, and the sea battered clangorously to their very feet. Heedless pair, clasped in each other's arms, lips pressed to lips.

I sat down wearily. I clutched my own hand over my breast, feeling another pain than they suffered in bliss. Mine was the pain of age and loneliness and desolation.

I and Ann Augusta!

Proving Up on Past Performance

By EDWIN BALMER

"HE looks all right to you?"

"Yes; what do you think?"

"Oh, all right." Corlett, the general manager, nodded. "He's worked for Ganton & Company, hasn't he? That'll tell about him; what kind of send-off did they give him?"

"Fine. Here it is."

Grant, the sales-manager, handed over a sheet of paper with Ganton & Company's well-known name and design at the top. The document was a formal recommendation of the usual sort, stating that Samuel Inglis had been in their employ for three years as city salesman; that he was at all times regular in his work, which was always satisfactory; and that his leaving the company was occasioned by necessary reduction in the city sales force following the discontinuance of certain specialties. The letter was signed by L. J. Quade, the sales-manager.

"That's all regular. You've telephoned this Quade, of course?"

"Yes; he says Inglis is a bright fellow; made very good sales."

"Take him on, then. Anything else?"

"Nothing else, Mr. Corlett. I'll start Inglis right away; you know we need—"

The sales-manager went out. Corlett, beyond making the mental note that he now had a good, well recommended man to take care of the growing sales on the northwest side, dismissed the matter, and he did not have occasion to take up employment problems again until just before starting for home that night, when the chief of the retail sales department appeared at the door of the private office.

"Come in, Barnes. Shut the door. Now you've located the trouble on your floor, have you?"

"Yes, sir; that is, I think I have, sir."

"Who is it?"

"Dan Farrell. At least, it's the boxes that he's been handling where we have had the losses. Some of these drugs this year, you know, are worth their weight in gold. Ten ounces of the solution—almost thirty dollars' worth—are missing again to-day."

"The previous record of an applicant is of great importance."

"You've seen him take the stuff?"

"Not seen him, sir, but almost the same as. I can trace the losses to him, all right. I'm sure it's Farrell."

"Then get rid of him. If you've no definite proof, just let him out on any good excuse. You'd better not let even him know why we're firing him; and of course not any one outside. If he didn't do it, we'd be doing him an injustice; and, besides, we might lay ourselves open to trouble. Understand? Good night, Barnes."

And Corlett went home quite easy in his mind, with both of the little problems that had been troubling him all settled. That there was any contradiction in the settlement of the two troubles never occurred to him.

It was not until one day about a month later that the essence of the contradiction offered itself to him as a subject for thought.

That day Grant burst into his office about noon, his hands full of receipted forms which he thrust down on the desk before Corlett.

"Look at those, please!"

Corlett, scrutinizing the sheets, saw that they were statements of sales to drug stores which all seemed to be on the northwest side of the city; all the statements had been stamped "Paid" by the firm stamp and initialed "S. I."

"Well, what about these, Grant?"

"Inglis is gone—skipped with four thousand dollars of our money, which he collected from our customers in his territory. That's what, Mr. Corlett! I suspected something was wrong yesterday when he didn't show up, and one of the druggists out there, who'd been told that his next order would be held up unless he paid Inglis at once, 'phoned in. Inglis has worked this drug shortage and the crisis with Germany to make those little foreign druggists out there believe—"

Grant gave the details of the scheme.

"Hm-m!" Corlett considered grimly. "Ganton & Company sent that fellow to us, didn't they? And didn't they recommend him? Have you called them up?"

"You bet I called them up! I talked to Quade—the man who recommended Inglis to us!"

Grant gripped the desk to keep control of himself.

"I told Quade what happened, and what do you suppose he had the nerve to say to me? He said he wasn't surprised! What do you know about that? I asked him what he meant, and finally I found out that they'd had a little trouble with Inglis over there. Nothing serious, Quade said; just a little irregularity about something. That was why they let him out—and recommended him to us!

"I asked Quade why he couldn't tell me that before. He said he didn't want to give the fellow a black eye; besides, they had no proof against him; they just suspected enough to fire him. That was all; and they sent him to us with a recommendation! That was a fine trick, wasn't it? That was—"

Corlett, as he listened, colored a little. A certain recollection of an action of his own recurred to him. When the sales-manager was gone, Corlett considered a moment, and then sent for Barnes.

"About that man we let go for dishon-